



## Intertextual Dialogue between Nizar Qabbani's Poetry “ترصيع بالذهب على سيف دمشق” and Zoulfa Katouh's Novel As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the intertextual dialogue between Nizar Qabbani's poem Qabbani “ترصيع بالذهب على سيف دمشق” and Zoulfa Katouh's novel \*As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow\* in constructing meaningful relationships across genres and generations. This study is based on the theoretical view that literary works never exist in isolation, but rather are always in dialogue with other texts through intertwined symbols, themes, and values. The focus of the research is directed at how the meanings present in Qabbani's poem are reactualized and reconstructed in Katouh's novel through different social and historical contexts, particularly within the contemporary Syrian conflict landscape. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach. The data sources were obtained from two literary texts, namely a poem by Nizar Qabbani and a novel by Zoulfa Katouh. The analysis was conducted using the concept of intertextuality through intensive reading techniques (close reading) to explore the hypost and hypertextual relationships established between the two works. The results of the study indicate the presence of six main forms of intertextual dialogue, namely: (1) the symbol of the lemon as a metaphor for the continuity of life and hope, (2) the relationship between the ghazal and love for the homeland, (3) the concept of %anîn as collective nostalgia that undergoes a transformation into trauma, (4) the representation of the house as a space of identity, (5) muqâwamah as a form of moral and humanitarian resistance. These findings indicate that Katouh's novel does not simply echo Qabbani's poem, but reconstructs its meaning according to the reality of the Syrian war, thus presenting a dynamic dialogue of meaning between two Arabic literary works from different historical contexts.

*Keywords: intertextuality, poetry, novel*

## Dialog Intertekstual antara Puisi Nizar Qabbani “ترصيع بالذهب على سيف دمشق” dan Novel As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow Zoulfa Katouh

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji dialog intertekstualitas antara puisi Nizar Qabbani “ترصيع بالذهب على سيف دمشق” dan novel As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow karya Zoulfa Katouh dalam membangun hubungan makna lintas genre dan generasi. Kajian ini berpijak pada pandangan teoretis bahwa karya sastra tidak pernah hadir secara terisolasi, melainkan selalu berdialog dengan teks lain melalui simbol, tema, dan nilai yang saling berkelindan. Fokus penelitian diarahkan pada bagaimana makna-makna yang hadir dalam puisi Qabbani direaktualisasi dan direkonstruksi dalam novel Katouh melalui konteks sosial dan historis yang berbeda, khususnya dalam lanskap konflik Suriah kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis. Sumber data diperoleh dari dua teks sastra, yaitu puisi karya Nizar Qabbani dan novel karya Zoulfa Katouh. Analisis dilakukan dengan menggunakan konsep intertekstualitas melalui teknik pembacaan intensif (close reading) untuk menelusuri hubungan hipotekst dan hipertekst yang terbangun di antara kedua karya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya enam bentuk dialog intertekstual utama, yaitu: (1) simbol lemon sebagai metafora keberlanjutan hidup dan harapan, (2) relasi ghazal: cinta terhadap tanah air, (3) konsep %anîn sebagai nostalgia kolektif yang mengalami transformasi menjadi trauma, (4) representasi rumah sebagai ruang identitas, (5) muqâwamah sebagai bentuk perlawanan moral dan kemanusiaan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa novel Katouh tidak sekadar menggemakan puisi Qabbani, tetapi merekonstruksi maknanya sesuai dengan realitas perang Suriah, sehingga menghadirkan dialog makna yang dinamis antara dua karya sastra Arab dari konteks zaman yang berbeda.

*Kata kunci : intertekstualitas, puisi, novel*

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## INTRODUCTION

Literature is a medium of human expression that reflects personal and collective experiences through imaginative and symbolic language. In the humanities, literature is understood not only as an aesthetic product but also as a discursive practice that records the social, historical, and ideological dynamics of a society (Wellek & Warren, 1956). In the context of Arabic literature, this function is even more prominent because literary works often serve as a space for the articulation of identity, collective memory, and responses to colonialism, conflict, and political violence (Allen, 2011).

The development of modern Arabic literature demonstrates a strong tendency toward the use of symbols and metaphors to articulate the relationship between the individual and the homeland. Modern Arabic poetry, particularly since the mid-20th century, is no longer solely oriented toward the aesthetics of language but also encompasses a complex social and political consciousness (Fadl, 1980). One central figure in this tradition is Nizar Qabbani. His works are known for their ability to combine personal love, nostalgia, and nationalism within a cohesive poetic structure. According to 'Abbas (1992), Qabbani's poetry represents a significant shift in modern Arabic literature, from romantic expression to the articulation of collective consciousness.

The poem “تَرْصِيعُ بِالذَّهَبِ عَلَى سَيْفِ دِمَشْقِيٍّ” specifically represents Damascus as a symbolic space encompassing love, memory, and national identity. In this poem, Qabbani does not simply depict the city as a geographical setting but personifies it as a living entity fused with the body and soul of the lyricist. Damascus appears as mother, lover, and homeland, thus creating an intimate and emotional relationship between the poet and the city. This poetic strategy demonstrates how personal love and love for the homeland are not positioned as separate themes, but rather intertwined within a unified structure of meaning.

Furthermore, the poem also includes natural symbols such as the Damascus sword and the lemon, which serve as metaphors for resilience, continuity of life, and hope. The lemon symbol, for example, represents the idea of regeneration and sustainability of the Arab nation amidst historical pressures. According to Fadl (1980), the use of natural symbols in modern Arabic poetry is often intended to convey an implicit ideological message without losing its aesthetic dimension. Thus, Qabbani's poetry can be understood as a text that combines personal expression, national consciousness, and cultural resistance within a single symbolic structure.

Meanwhile, Zoulfa Katouh's novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* presents a different perspective on Syria. Set during the Syrian war, the novel focuses on the experiences of Salama, a young woman facing trauma, loss, and existential dilemmas amidst social collapse. Unlike Qabbani's poetry, which uses symbolic and lyrical language, Katouh conveys the realities of war through a realistic narrative that emphasizes bodily experience, memory, and human suffering.

In this novel, the symbol of the lemon, which previously appeared as a metaphor for fertility and hope in Qabbani's poetry, undergoes a transformation in meaning. The lemon no longer simply symbolizes life growing naturally, but also becomes a symbol of human steadfastness and vitality amidst destruction. Katouh explicitly quotes a verse from Qabbani's poem that reads: "Every lemon will give rise to a new shoot, and the lemon will never become extinct." The verse not only appears as an aesthetic tribute to Qabbani, but also becomes the semantic and symbolic foundation for the title of the novel Katouh. In Qabbani's poetry, the image of the "lemon" symbolizes life, hope, and regeneration of the Arab nation amidst adversity. However, when this symbol is presented again in the context of Katouh's novel, its meaning undergoes a transformation: from a symbol of fertility to a symbol of the steadfastness and vitality of the Syrian people who continue to survive amidst war and loss. This phenomenon shows a process of re-semantization of the shift in meaning from the old text to the new, making As



Long as the Lemon Trees Grow not simply a work inspired by Qabbani's poetry, but a form of dialogue between eras and genres. One simple poetic phrase, “كُلِّ لِيْمُونَةٍ سَتَجِبُ طِفْلًا” crosses generations: from 20th-century postcolonial poetry to 21st-century diasporic novels, carrying with it the spirit of love, resistance, and humanity that is the soul of Qabbani's works. Real intertextual relations, where old texts are not only presented again, but also recontextualized according to social and historical realities.

Thus, Qabbani's poetry and Katouh's novel represent two stages of the Arab historical experience. Qabbani's poetry reflects a romantic-critical phase that affirms collective love and hope, while Katouh's novel depicts a phase of trauma and survival amidst war. This difference opens up a rich intertextual dialogue, as both works share similar symbols and themes but articulate them through different media, styles, and contemporary contexts.

In the context of contemporary Arab literature, particularly diaspora literature, similar themes re-emerge with different articulations. Zoulfa Katouh's novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* presents Syria as a space of trauma, loss, and fragmented identity resulting from war. The novel depicts the experiences of individuals facing physical and psychological destruction while maintaining an emotional bond with their homeland. According to Harlow (2012), literature born from the experience of conflict often places memory and the body at the center of the narrative, replacing the heroic symbols dominant in classical national literature.

The thematic connection between Qabbani's poetry and Katouh's novel demonstrates that literary works do not exist autonomously. This relationship can be understood through the concept of intertextuality. Kristeva (1969) views texts as mosaics of quotations that are always in dialogue with other texts, while Genette (1997) develops the concepts of hypost and hypertext to explain the relationship of transformation and reactualization of meaning between texts. Within this framework, Qabbani's poetry can be positioned as a hypost that provides basic symbols, themes, and affections, while Katouh's novel functions as a hypertext that reconstructs these meanings within the socio-historical context of the contemporary Syrian war.

Based on this background, the research problem is formulated as follows: How does the intertextual dialogue between Nizar Qabbani's poem “تَرْصِيْعٌ بِالذَّهَبِ عَلَى سَيْفٍ دِمَشْقِيٍّ” and Zoulfa Katouh's novel "As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow" establish a meaningful relationship between the two works?

In line with this research problem, the purpose of this research is to examine the intertextual dialogue between Nizar Qabbani's poem and Zoulfa Katouh's novel in establishing meaningful relationships across genres and generations.

The benefits of this research can be viewed from two perspectives. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the study of intertextuality in Arabic literature by showing how symbols, themes, and values move across genres and generations. Practically, this research is expected to serve as a reference for researchers and teachers of Arabic literature in applying intertextual reading and as teaching material in the study of comparative literature and contemporary Arabic literature.

The theoretical overview in this study includes the concepts of intertextuality and comparative literature. Kristeva (1969) asserts that texts are always formed in dialogue with other texts. Genette (1997) clarifies this relationship through the concepts of hypost and hypertext. In the context of Arabic literature, Fadl (1980) emphasize that modern Arabic poetry is characterized by a density of symbols and an interweaving of personal and social themes. Meanwhile, Allen (2011) positions modern Arabic literature as a product of a dialogue between tradition, social reality, and historical experience.

Several relevant studies have discussed intertextuality in Arabic literature. Mahamod (2014) suggests that the symbol of the city in modern Arabic poetry functions as a representation of collective identity. Rahman's (2019) research in an Arabic literary journal found a transformation in the meaning

of national symbols in post-conflict Arabic novels. Meanwhile, Sari (2021), Anggraini (2021), Naililhaq (2020) emphasized that intertextual dialogue between poetry and prose can reveal ideological shifts in contemporary literature. However, these studies have not specifically examined the intertextual dialogue between Nizar Qabbani's poetry and the novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, especially within the framework of the hypost-hypertext relationship across genres and generations. Furthermore, studies linking modern Arabic poetry with contemporary Arabic novels are still relatively limited and tend to separate the analysis of poetry and prose into different areas of study. However, according to Eagleton (2008), a rigid separation of genres has the potential to hinder understanding of the dynamics of meaning that move across literary forms. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by offering an intertextual reading that positions poetry and novels as two mediums in dialogue with each other in representing the historical, emotional, and ideological experiences of the Arab nation. Thus, this study not only confirms the relevance of Nizar Qabbani's work in contemporary Arabic literature, but also shows how the symbolic and thematic heritage of modern Arabic poetry continues to live on and undergo transformation in the literary works of subsequent generations.

## METHOD

This research is a qualitative study using a descriptive-analytical method. This method is used to describe the research data in the form of literary texts, then analyze them in depth to uncover the relationships of meaning contained within (Balaka, 2012, Emzir, 2018; Razak, 2017).

The main focus of the research is directed at the intertextual dialogue between Nizar Qabbani's poem "ترصيع بالذهب على سيف دمشق" and Zoulfa Katouh's novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, specifically exploring the intertwined symbols, themes, and values between the two works. A qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand the construction of meaning in literary texts as representations of social and human experiences, rather than to measure phenomena quantitatively.

In the data collection process, this study used a note-taking technique. The researcher acted as the primary instrument (human instrument) by conducting intensive close readings of the two literary texts that were the objects of study. Through this reading, the researcher identified and recorded sections of the text containing symbols, metaphors, themes, and expressions indicating intertextual relationships. The collected data was then organized into data cards and categorization tables to facilitate the analysis process.

Data analysis was conducted descriptively and analytically, referring to the concept of intertextuality. The analysis process involved several stages:

1. Reading and understanding both texts thoroughly to obtain the context of meaning.
2. Identifying text units relevant to the research focus.
3. Grouping data based on the categories of symbols, themes, and values.
4. Analyzing hypost-hypertext relationships and the forms of meaning transformation that emerged.
5. Drawing conclusions based on the patterns of meaning dialogue discovered.

## RESULT

An intertextual analysis of Nizar Qabbani's poem "The Longest Lemon Trees Grow" and Zoulfa Katouh's novel "As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow" demonstrates a dialogue of meaning across mediums and historical contexts. In the poem, Damascus appears as a symbolic space steeped in love, memory, and national identity, with the lemon symbol serving as a metaphor for regeneration, the continuation of life, and the collective aspirations of the Arab nation (Fadl, 1980). Qabbani connects personal and



national love, so that the lemon functions as a metaphor for the nation's life and aspirations, making the poem a thematically and affectively rich hypostasis.

In Katouh's novel, the lemon symbol is reimagined as a symbol of steadfastness, vitality, and human resilience amidst the trauma and violence of contemporary Syria. This transformation emphasizes dynamic intertextuality: old symbols are not simply reintroduced but change their meaning according to the new socio-historical context.

Beyond the lemon, the themes of love and identity also serve as intertextual bridges. Qabbani personifies the city as mother and homeland; Katouh adapts this concept to the characters' experiences of collective trauma, emphasizing that poetic quotations serve as semantic foundations for expressing emotional connections, memories, and suffering in the contemporary context.

Intertextual dialogue also encompasses shifts in medium and style. Qabbani's poetry is lyrical, symbolic, and dense with meaning, while Katouh's novel emphasizes realistic narratives that present psychological and social experiences. This difference in medium demonstrates the flexibility of intertextuality: hypotexts can transform into hypertexts, adapting to new narrative styles and purposes. Thus, intertextuality is not merely a process of citation, but also a transformation of meaning that enriches the reader's experience, opens up interpretation, and maintains the original thematic value.

Furthermore, the socio-historical context is a crucial element in this intertextual reading. Qabbani's Damascus is a symbolic space of the postcolonial era emphasizing hope and regeneration for the Arab nation, while Katouh's Syria is a space of contemporary conflict that showcases trauma and survival. This shift in context demonstrates how symbols and themes can move across history, medium, and generations, allowing intertextuality to allow old and new texts to dialogue with each other, building complex resonances of meaning.

The analysis reveals several key mechanisms of intertextuality in Katouh's novel:

1. Direct quotations that affirm an explicit connection to Qabbani's poetry;
2. Symbolic transformations that adapt the meaning of the lemon to the context of the Syrian war;
3. Reinforcement of themes connecting personal love, identity, and survival;
4. Narrative consequences that enable new reader experiences with old symbols and themes.

This phenomenon confirms that intertextuality acts as a literary strategy that expands the dimensions of a literary work's meaning. By presenting quotations from Qabbani's poetry in Katouh's novel, the lemon symbol not only retains its aesthetic and thematic value but also undergoes resemiotization, reflecting new socio-historical realities and emphasizing the continuity of the Arab nation's historical experience from the postcolonial period to the 21st century. This transformation also demonstrates how modern and contemporary Arabic literature are interconnected, establishing a dialogue across genres, mediums, and generations.

### 1. Intertextual Dialogue through the Lemon Symbol

The first intertextual dialogue is evident in the use of the lemon symbol as a representation of the continuity of life, explicitly connecting Nizar Qabbani's poetry with the novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. In the poem “ترصيع بالذهب على سيف دمشق”، Qabbani emphasizes his belief in the continuity of life of the Arab nation through the verse “كُلُّ لَيْمُونَةٍ سَتُنْجِبُ طِفْلاً وَمَحَالٌ أَنْ يَنْتَهِيَ اللَّيْمُونُ”، God is the only one who can give birth to new life,” which can be interpreted as meaning that every lemon will give birth to new life and that the lemon's existence as a symbol of the nation cannot be destroyed. In this context, the lemon serves as a metaphor for fertility, regeneration, and the historical resilience of Damascus as the center of Arab civilization and identity.

This symbolic meaning is then re-presented and recontextualized in Katouh's novel through several narratives.

Table 1  
Intertextual Dialogue Analysis through the Lemon Symbol

كُلُّ لَيْمُونَةٍ سَتُنَجِّبُ طِفْلاً وَمَحَالٌ أَنْ يَنْتَهِيَ اللَّيْمُونُ

*“Every lemon shall give birth to a child,  
and it is impossible for the lemons to ever cease.”*

Novel Data (Zoulfa Katouh)	Intertextuality Analysis
<p>"We held our heads high and planted lemon trees as a symbol of resistance, praying that if they came for us, they would immediately put a bullet in our heads. Because that would be more honorable than waiting in the filthy valley of their prison system." (Katouh ,2022)</p>	<p>The first intertextual dialogue is explored through the symbol of the lemon as a representation of continuity and resistance. The transformation of this symbol from poem to novel serves as a semantic tool that affirms steadfastness, vitality, and moral aspirations in the context of conflict, thus expanding meaning across texts and socio-historical contexts.</p>
<p>"The lemon trees are still growing, thriving, providing nourishment for the revolution." (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>This intertextual dialogue presents the lemon symbol as a metaphor for collective resilience and the continuity of identity. Within the context of the novel, the symbol is recontextualized to emphasize the resilience of Syrian individuals and society in the face of oppression and violence, while maintaining the historical and affective continuity of Qabbani's poetic hypostasis.</p>
<p>"I am Syrian. This is my homeland. And like the lemon trees that have grown here for centuries, no amount of blood will stop us. I trust in God, he will protect me. I have been forced to endure oppression, but I will no longer endure this bitterness, whatever the cost." (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>This intertextual dialogue presents the lemon symbol as a metaphor for collective resilience and the continuity of identity. Within the context of the novel, the symbol is recontextualized to emphasize the resilience of Syrian individuals and society in the face of oppression and violence, while maintaining the historical and affective continuity of Qabbani's poetic hypostasis.</p>
<p>"The lemon trees are still growing, thriving, providing nourishment for the revolution." (Katouh 2022)</p>	<p>This intertextual dialogue demonstrates the transformation of the lemon symbol into a metaphor for the continuity of struggle. In Katouh's novel, the lemon symbolizes not only biological or historical regeneration, but also the continuation of the spirit of resistance, thus emphasizing the existential and political continuity grounded in Qabbani's hypothetical ideology.</p>
<p>"Lemons take time. We are growing trees. They require patience, as does change." (Katouh 202)</p>	<p>This intertextual dialogue emphasizes the temporal and processual dimensions of the lemon symbol. Katouh emphasizes patience and growth as essential aspects of social and political change, shifting the meaning of Qabbani's hypothetical from biological regeneration to a narrative reflection on perseverance, transformation, and collective resilience.</p>



Based on Genette's hypost-hypertextual framework, the presence of the lemon symbol in Katouh's novel represents a transformation of meaning, not simply a textual repetition. Katouh does not quote Qabbani's poetry as an aesthetic ornament, but rather uses it as a semantic foundation for constructing a narrative about the survival of the Syrian people. From Kristeva's perspective, the lemon symbol operates as a meeting point for various discourses of poetry, history, and social reality that are intertwined in the novel's text.

Thus, the lemon symbol functions as a medium for intergenerational dialogue, bringing together the national romanticism in Qabbani's poetry with the narrative of humanity and existential resistance in Katouh's novel. This intertextual dialogue emphasizes that the meaning of the symbol is not static, but rather constantly shifts and changes according to the historical context and collective experiences surrounding it.

## 2. Intertextual Dialogue through the Representation of Love for the Motherland (Ghazals)

The next intertextual dialogue is evident in the metaphorical representation of love for the motherland that connects Nizar Qabbani's poetry with the novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. In the poem “ترصيع بالذَّهَبِ عَلَى سَيْفِ دِمَشْقِيَّ”<sup>1</sup>, Qabbani personifies Damascus as an object of intimate and emotional love through the phrase, يا دمشق التي تفشى شذاها تحت جلدي كأنه الزيزفون. This metaphor places the homeland not merely as a geographical space or political entity, but as an affective figure that is integrated with the personal and emotional identity of the lyrical subject. Love for the homeland in Qabbani's poetry emerges as an inner, existential bond, transcending the rhetoric of formal nationalism.

This affective concept finds its reflection in the novel Katouh through the inner experiences of Salama, who interprets the homeland as an inseparable part of her being. This is reflected in several of her statements.

Table 2  
 Intertextual Dialogue Analysis Through the Representation of Elements of Love for the Homeland (Ghazal)

يا دمشق التي تفشى شذاها  
 تحت جلدي كأنه الزيزفون

“O Damascus, whose fragrance spreads  
 beneath my skin like the scent of linden blossoms.”

Novel Data (Zoulfa Katouh)	Intertextuality Analysis
Lemons take time. We are growing trees. They require patience, as does change. (Katouh, 2022)	This intertextual dialogue highlights the internalization and actualization of love for the homeland. Katouh recontextualizes Qabbani's poetic affection within the concrete experiences of Syrians, where national identity is not merely a symbol or word, but is manifested through everyday practices and a collective sense of moral responsibility. This transformation emphasizes the continuity of the ghazal's theme of homeland from the poetic realm to the historical-existential narrative.

<p>"And I'm talking about my country, about the freedom that is my right. How could I leave that when for the first time in my life I can breathe the air of freedom in Syria?" (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>This intertextual dialogue reflects the actualization of love for one's homeland as an existential and moral right. Qabbani's verse, which glorifies Damascus as the core of life and the spirit of the times, is recontextualized by Katouh into a narrative of individual experience that internalizes independence as a personal obligation to survive and defend one's homeland. This intertextuality emphasizes the continuity of affective expression in the poem into ethical and patriotic motivations in the novel's narrative.</p>
<p>"In my 19 years of life, I have known no other home. It would break my heart to leave here. This land is me, and I am this land. My history. My ancestors, my family. We are all here." (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>This intertextual dialogue emphasizes the internalization of national identity as part of one's existence. Qabbani's verse, which positions Damascus as the "heart and spirit of the times," is projected by Katouh into a narrative that totally connects the individual to the homeland: identifying oneself, history, and family as inseparable parts of the country. This transformation expands the poem's meaning into a personal and collective experience, where love and attachment to the homeland serve as moral and existential foundations.</p>
<p>"Syria will live in our hearts forever." (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>Intertextuality is evident in Qabbani's poetry's depiction of Damascus as the center of life and the spirit of the times. This transformation demonstrates how the expression of patriotism in poetry serves as a semantic basis for constructing a narrative of nationalism and collective identity in the novel.</p>
<p>"It all boils down to one truth. This country is my homeland. I have no other homeland. Leaving here is the same as dying." (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>The intertextual dialogue between Qabbani and Katouh represents the homeland as a locus of identity and existential continuity. In Qabbani's poem, Damascus serves as a symbol of vitality and continuity, while Katouh asserts: "Leaving here is the same as dying" (2022), emphasizing the homeland as an irreplaceable moral and existential referent.</p>
<p>"Syria, where, at the end of a long life, I will return to the land that raised me. Syria, which is my home." (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>This intertextual dialogue emphasizes the concept of homeland as the center of affection and existential attachment. Qabbani positions Damascus as a historical identity, while Katouh emphasizes the character's return to his homeland (Syria, which is my home, 2022: 451), representing the homeland as a deeply embedded moral, historical, and personal reference point.</p>

Within Genette's hypost-hypertext framework, this relationship demonstrates a thematic transformation, where the motif of love for the homeland from Qabbani's poetry is adapted and recontextualized within the narrative structure of Katouh's novel. Katouh does not repeat Qabbani's metaphor literally, but rather transposes it into the subjective experience of a character living amidst war and separation.



Meanwhile, from Kristeva's intertextual perspective, love for the homeland operates as a dialogue between poetic discourse, collective memory, and traumatic reality, which intertwine to form new meanings.

Thus, this intertextual dialogue confirms that love for the homeland in contemporary Arabic literature is no longer merely rhetorical glorification, but rather an existential experience marked by a sense of loss, identity attachment, and the determination to endure. Katouh's novel echoes the affections established by Qabbani, but shifts them from the symbolic-romantic realm to the psychological-narrative realm, thus broadening the meaning of love for the homeland as a human experience amidst historical violence.

### 3. Intertextual Dialogue on the Concept of Longing (hanin)

The next intertextual dialogue is evident in the presence of the concept of hanin (longing) as an affective bridge between the past and the present, connecting Nizar Qabbani's poetry with the novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. In the poem "تَرْصِيْعٌ بِالذَّهَبِ عَلَى سَيْفِ دِمَشْقِيَّ", Qabbani presents anin as a collective nostalgia for the ideal, peaceful and warm Damascus, as reflected in several arrays: larik : "هل مرايا دمشق تعرف وجهي من جديد أم غيرتني السنين" "يا دمشق التي تفشى شذاها تحت جلدي كأنه الزيزفون".

The longing in this poem serves as a comforting space of memory, where the lyricist rediscovers meaning, identity, and emotional strength amidst a fractured reality.

This nuance of Hanin is then re-presented and recontextualized in Katouh's novel through Salama's memories of pre-war Syria. However, unlike Qabbani's, nostalgia in this novel is no longer idealistic and empowering, but rather fragile and painful. This is reflected in several statements.

Table 3  
 Intertextual Dialogue Analysis of the Concept of Longing (Hanin)

هل مرايا دمشق تعرف وجهي  
 "من جديد أم غيرتني السنين"  
 "يا دمشق التي تفشى شذاها تحت جلدي كأنه الزيزفون"  
 "Do the mirrors of Damascus still recognize my face,  
 or have the years changed me anew?"  
 "O Damascus, whose fragrance spreads  
 beneath my skin like the scent of linden blossoms."

Novel Data (Zoulfa Katouh)	Intertextuality Analysis
"Our family photos are buried in the rubble of our house, and I will never get them back." (Katouh, 2022)	This intertextual dialogue presents themes of longing and emotional attachment to family and the past. Qabbani emphasizes nostalgia, while Katouh represents real loss and the desire to restore a family shattered by conflict (2022), presenting the dimensions of humanity and trauma in the context of war.
"Our family photos are buried in the rubble of our house, and I'll never get them back." (Katouh, 2022)	This intertextual dialogue presents themes of longing and emotional attachment to family and the past. Qabbani emphasizes nostalgia, while Katouh represents real loss and the desire to restore a family shattered by conflict (2022), presenting the dimensions of humanity and trauma in the context of war.
"I miss doing nothing. The days when	This intertextual dialogue presents themes of longing and

<p>I just lay in bed watching movies. Or when we talked on the phone for hours.” (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>emotional attachment to family and the past. Qabbani emphasizes nostalgia, while Katouh represents real loss and the desire to restore a family shattered by conflict (2022), presenting the dimensions of humanity and trauma in the context of war.</p>
<p>“Syria will live in our hearts forever.” (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>This intertextual dialogue showcases a longing for a peaceful life. Qabbani emphasizes nostalgia, while Katouh highlights the loss of simple moments due to harsh social conditions (2022), creating a meaningful connection between the idealization of the past and the awareness of existential loss.</p>
<p>"Baba, in his best suit, intertwined his fingers with Mama's, and at that moment my knees gave out from the unbearable longing I felt for them. I burst into tears. I wanted to hug them all." (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>Qabbani expresses a longing for pure love, while Katouh presents that longing in a touching visual form: the moment Baba holds Mama's hand strikes the character with a deep longing and unbearable tears (2022). This intertextuality brings together the emotional idealization of poetry with the intensity of real experience in the novel.</p>

Within Genette's hypost-hypertext framework, the concept of *anin* in Katouh's novel can be understood as a thematic transformation of Qabbani's poetic nostalgia. Katouh does not reproduce longing as a romanticization of the past, but rather shifts it into a traumatic experience that continues to haunt the subject. Meanwhile, from Kristeva's intertextual perspective, *anin* functions as a discursive node that brings together poetry, collective memory, and the reality of historical violence, thus producing a new, darker and more complex meaning.

Thus, the intertextual dialogue through the concept of *anin* confirms the shift in meaning from nostalgia as a source of emotional strength in Qabbani's poetry to nostalgia as an open wound in Katouh's novel. This transformation demonstrates that longing for the homeland in contemporary Syrian literature is no longer merely nurturing hope, but also records the trauma and loss that are inseparable from the existential experience of the post-war generation.

#### 4. Intertextual Dialogue on Home as Identity (Home and Belonging)

The next intertextual dialogue is evident in the representation of the home as a space of identity, which serves as an affective bridge between collective memory and individual experience in Nizar Qabbani's poetry and novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. In his poems about Damascus, Qabbani places the city as a symbolic home that is intact, dignified, and the center of collective identity, as reflected in the lines

"يا سريري.. ويا شراشف أُمي يا عصافير.. يا شذا، يا غصونُ"  
"يا زورايب حارتي.. خبئني بين جفنيك فالزمان ضنينُ"  
"كتب الله أن تكوني دمشق بك يبدأ وينتهي التكوينُ"

“O my bed... and my mother's sheets,  
O little birds... O fragrance, O branches.”  
“O the alleys of my neighborhood...  
Hide me between your eyelids, for time is miserly.”



“God has decreed that you shall be Damascus;  
 With you creation begins and with you it ends.”

Table 4  
 Intertextual Dialogue Analysis of Home as Identity (home and belonging)

يا سريري.. ويا شرافف أمي يا عصفير.. يا شذا، يا غصونُ  
 "يا زورايب حارتي.. خبيني بين جفنيك فالزمان ضنينُ"  
 "كتب الله أن تكوني دمشق بك يبدأ وينتهي التكوينُ"  
 "O my bed... and my mother's sheets,  
 O little birds... O fragrance, O branches."  
 "O the alleys of my neighborhood...  
 Hide me between your eyelids, for time is miserly."  
 "God has decreed that you shall be Damascus;  
 With you creation begins and with you it ends."

Novel Data (Zoulfia Katouh)	Intertextuality Analysis
"To all the Syrians who have loved, lost, lived, and died for Syria. We will return home one day." (Katouh, 2022)	This intertextual dialogue presents the home as a symbol of identity and belonging. Qabbani depicts Damascus, whose aroma penetrates the soul, while Katouh emphasizes homecoming as a recognition of the emotional bonds and collective existence of the Syrian people. Both texts complement each other in affirming the home as the center of identity and inner connection.
"When I returned to my razed house after the bombing, I found nothing of mine. Everything was buried under granite rubble." (Katouh, 2022)	This intertextual dialogue emphasizes the home as a symbol of identity and attachment. Qabbani presents Damascus as a lasting impression, while Katouh depicts the destruction of the home due to war, emphasizing collective loss and trauma. Both texts emphasize the home as a center of identity and memory.
"Home is no longer a place I can return to, but something I carry inside myself." (Katouh, 2022)	This intertextual dialogue presents home as part of identity and a sense of belonging. Qabbani conjures up a fragrant, vivid Damascus in memory, while Katouh emphasizes that home is now held in the heart, not merely a physical place. Both connect the experience of space with a deep emotional bond.
"Is there still beauty? Is there still life and strength in Homs (home). Is there still color?" (Katouh 2022)	This intertextual dialogue emphasizes the home as a symbol of identity and emotional attachment. Qabbani depicts Damascus as pervaded by memories and feelings, while Katouh highlights the doubts and search for remnants of life in Homs, making the home an inner space containing memories, hopes, and existential questions.

The house and city in this poem function as living spaces, where the lyricist finds meaning, identity, and emotional attachment.

This nuance of home as identity is then recontextualized in Katouh's novel through Salama's experiences, where home is no longer physically present, but rather prayer and hope, as a fragile inner space.

This shift reveals the house as a symbol of emptiness, total loss, and collective post-war trauma, in contrast to the idealized and dignified representation in Qabbani's poem.

Within Genette's hypost-hypertextual framework, the house in Katouh's novel can be understood as a thematic transformation of Qabbani's symbolic home. Meanwhile, from Kristeva's intertextual perspective, the house functions as a discursive node connecting poetry, collective memory, and experiences of historical violence, generating new, dark and complex meanings. Thus, this intertextual dialogue confirms the shift in the meaning of home from a geographical space and symbol of collective identity to an internal space of fragility, loss, and trauma.

### 5. Intertextual Dialogue on Muqawamah as a Form of Moral and Humanitarian Resistance

An intertextual dialogue on muqawamah as a form of moral and humanitarian resistance is evident in Nizar Qabbani's poem, "مزقي يا دمشق خارطة الذل وقولي للدهر كن فيكون". This verse emphasizes resistance against the humiliation and oppression that befell Damascus, demanding moral fortitude, courage, and resilience from its people. Qabbani presents Damascus not simply as a geographical space, but as a symbol of ethical and humanitarian resistance, where oppression is rejected and the hope for regeneration and dignity is upheld. This symbolic meaning is then recontextualized in the novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* through the character's narrative, which emphasizes the moral responsibility to defend the homeland. This demonstrates the transformation of Qabbani's poetic message into a contemporary narrative context, emphasizing muqawamah as moral resistance, humanitarian responsibility, and the steadfastness of identity.

Table 5

Intertextual Dialogue Analysis of Muqawamah as a Form of Moral and Humanitarian Resistance

مزقي يا دمشق خارطة الذل

"وقولي للدهر كن فيكون"

*"Tear apart, O Damascus,*

*the map of humiliation,*

*and say to fate: Be—and it shall be."*

Novel Data (Zoulfa Katouh)	Intertextuality Analysis
"This is my country, if I run away, if I don't defend it, who will?" (Katouh, 2022)	This intertextual dialogue emphasizes muqāwamah as moral resistance. Qabbani's verse "tearing up the map of humiliation" is reflected in Katouh's decision to defend her country, demonstrating the transformation of poetic symbols into concrete acts of resistance by the Syrian people.
"We will continue to fight as long as we are here, because this is our country. This is your father's homeland, and his father's. Your history is imprinted on this land. There is no other country in the world that loves you more than your own country." (Katouh, 2022)	This intertextual dialogue emphasizes muqāwamah as existential resistance. Qabbani's verse is reflected in Katouh's narrative, which affirms a commitment to defending the homeland, linking the poem's symbolism to the Syrian generation's sense of history, identity, and moral responsibility.



<p>"Go to hell, Assad. We will come for you. We fear no one but God, and Assad is a murderer." (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>This intertextual dialogue positions muqāwamah as an articulation of moral courage. Qabbani's call to tear up the "map of humiliation" is reinterpreted in the open expression of resistance in Katouh, which expresses a rejection of fear and the legitimacy of repressive power based on ethical and religious beliefs.</p>
<p>"I don't know who told you that leaving was a cowardly thing to do, but it's not. Saving yourself from people who want to kill you is not a cowardly act." (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>This intertextual dialogue emphasizes the moral dimension of muqāwamah in the context of survival. Qabbani calls for the rejection of humiliation, while Katouh's narrative emphasizes that protecting oneself from a deadly threat is not cowardice, but rather a realistic form of ethical resistance amidst violence.</p>
<p>"I closed my eyes, unable to bear their pain in my heart without folding myself up and crying myself to death. Why? Why didn't anyone help us? Why were we left to die? How could the world be so cruel!" (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>This intertextual dialogue reflects moral resistance to injustice. Qabbani calls for liberation from humiliation, while Katouh's narrative expresses both suffering and the ethical awareness that confronting cruelty is part of muqāwamah: human resistance to oppression.</p>
<p>"That's why we have faith, Salama. It's our duty to fight, to live, and to pave the way." (Katouh, 2022)</p>	<p>This intertextual dialogue emphasizes muqāwamah as a moral responsibility. Qabbani demands resistance against humiliation, while Katouh asserts that struggle is an existential obligation to survive, survive, and pave the way for the future.</p>

Based on Genette's hypost-hypertext framework, this poetic quotation is not merely repeated as an aesthetic ornament, but rather serves as a semantic foundation that constructs the novel's narrative of resistance. Meanwhile, from Kristeva's perspective, this intertextuality serves as a meeting point between poetry, history, and contemporary socio-political experience, enriching its symbolic and thematic meaning. Thus, the intertextual dialogue through this muqawamah emphasizes that moral and humanitarian resistance in Arabic literature is not static, but rather constantly moving and transforming, building resonances of meaning across texts, media, and generations.

## DISCUSSION

The research findings show that the intertextuality between Nizar Qabbani's poem "The Way of the Lemon Trees" and Zoulfia Katouh's novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* displays a rich literary dialogue through symbols, themes, and affective experiences. The symbol of the lemon serves as the primary medium, where in Qabbani's poem the lemon represents fertility, regeneration, and the survival of the Arab nation, while in Katouh's novel it is reimagined as a symbol of the steadfastness and vitality of the Syrian people amidst the devastation of war. This transformation demonstrates that hypotheticals can construct new meanings according to the socio-historical context without losing their original thematic resonance.

In addition to the lemon symbol, the theme of patriotism also serves as an intertextual bridge. Qabbani's poetry personifies Damascus as an intimate, affective figure, while Katouh places patriotism within the subjective experiences of characters facing conflict and trauma. The concept of hanin, or longing, undergoes a transformation, from an idealized and comforting nostalgia in the poem to a trau-

matic longing caused by loss and destruction in the novel. The representation of the home as a symbol of identity also shifts, from a whole and dignified Damascus in Qabbani's poetry to a fragile and physically lost home in Katouh's novel. This shift emphasizes that intertextuality is not merely citation, but a creative process that allows symbols, themes, and meanings to move across mediums, contexts, and generations. Katouh's novel affirms the aesthetic and thematic relevance of Qabbani's poetry, while adapting it to contemporary Syrian realities, resulting in a complex, relevant, and transformative reader experience.

This study excels in presenting an in-depth analysis of the intertextuality between modern Arabic poetry and the contemporary Syrian novel, emphasizing the relevance of hypostasis as a source of meaning in the formation of new narratives. However, this study also has limitations, primarily due to its focus on only one novel and one poem as samples. This limitation means that the findings regarding intertextual mechanisms cannot be generalized to other works by the same author or to contemporary Arabic literature more broadly. Therefore, it is recommended that future research involve a larger corpus of data, including several works of poetry and novels, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of intertextual processes in modern and contemporary Arabic literature.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings above, this study demonstrates that the intertextuality between Nizar Qabbani's poetry and Zoulfa Katouh's novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* establishes a rich literary dialogue through the symbols of lemon, patriotism, hanin, and home as identity. Katouh's novel transforms Qabbani's symbols and themes to suit the contemporary Syrian socio-historical context, allowing old meanings to evolve into emotional experiences, resilience, and existential resistance. Thus, intertextuality functions as a creative strategy that allows old and new texts to dialogue with each other, maintaining both aesthetic value and contemporary relevance, and demonstrating the continuity of major themes in Arabic literature.

Based on the intertextual analysis, several key points emerge:

1. Transformation of the lemon symbol: The lemon in Qabbani's poetry is recontextualized in Katouh's novel as a metaphor for resilience, endurance, and existential resistance, rather than simply an aesthetic ornament.
2. Love for the homeland (ghazal): Emotional attachment to the homeland is adapted into the psychological experience of the character Katouh, emphasizing loss, identity, and the courage to persevere amidst conflict.
3. The concept of longing (anin): Collective nostalgia and longing for Damascus in the poem are transformed into a traumatic experience, reflecting the fragile longing caused by social destruction and war.
4. Home as identity (home and belonging): The house, as a symbol of collective identity, is recontextualized as a fragile inner space, reflecting emptiness, loss, and post-war trauma.
5. Intertextuality across mediums and transformative-affective meaning

The novel "As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow" demonstrates that the symbols and themes in Nizar Qabbani's poetry can move across mediums and generations, establishing ongoing thematic and affective resonance. Through the process of resemiotization, symbols such as home, lemon, and longing (anin) retain their aesthetic and ideological value, while undergoing a transformation of meaning within the context of Katouh's contemporary narrative. This intertextuality emphasizes that old themes are not merely repeated, but rather revived as a medium for the formation of identity, collective memory, and human resistance.



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